DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 027 278 SP 002 371

A Proposal by the Student National Education Association and the Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory. A Student Teacher Live-In Indian Project.

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Note-6p.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.40

Descriptors-American Indians, *Cross Cultural Training, Education Majors, Project Applications

Identifiers-Canoncito Navajo Reservation, New Mexico

A live-in project for 10 prospective teachers at the Canoncito Navajo Reservation (Laguna, N. Mex.), commencing in February 1969 with participant recruitment by reservation representatives and the Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory (SWCEL), is designed to determine the contribution of the student teachers to the Indian community and to assess the potential for personal sensitivity growth and teacher education reform through such cross-cultural exposure. Following their recruitment, students will participate in a week's orientation phase designed to provide a general ethnological understanding of Navajo culture and of the particular reservation tribe, basic use of the Navajo language, personal awareness through sensitivity training, and a pre-live-in experience to determine individual student needs. During the subsequent six-week live-in, each student, paired with a community member or "buddy," is responsible for assisting school personnel, working with community development programs under Tribal Council guidance, developing an awareness of the community's educational problems or achievements, and keeping a personal log. Upon project completion, each student is expected to develop a curriculum of supplementary cross-cultural experiences. An illustrative film and formal evaluation by SWCEL are expected. (LP)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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A PROPOSAL BY THE STUDENT NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND THE SOUTHWESTERN COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY A STUDENT TEACHER LIVE-IN INDIAN PROJECT

The Problem

A pervasive problem in American education today is the difficulty many teachers are having in relating to children who are being reared in cultural environments governed by norms and mores not familiar to the teacher. The preponderance of today's teachers are Caucasian and come from a middle class socio-economic background. The children whom they teach, however, may be not only white, but also Indian, Negro, Oriental, or Mexican-American; additionally, they may represent the full range of socio-economic backgrounds. Teacher education is not preparing teachers to deal with such heterogeneity and not providing student teachers* with a variety of cross-cultural experiences to develop their sensitivity to the diverse needs of children.

The Proposal

For the reasons stated above, it is important to design and execute a project whereby student teachers from the mainstream of the American culture can have, prior to being certified to teach, a first-hand experience living with and working with a group of people whose culture and mores are different. This proposal outlines a "live-in" experience for a small group of student teachers who, over a brief period of time and with appropriate orientation, will serve the Indian community of the Canoncito Navajo Reservation in Laguna, New Mexico. The central purposes of the project are to test the thesis that student teachers can make a contribution to the Indian community, to study

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* The term "student teacher" is used here in the broad sense to mean all students who are preparing to teach.

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the dimensions of that contribution, to determine the potential for growth in sensitivity to cultural differences through such an experience, and to report the results to the teacher education community as one basis for curricular reform in teacher education.

Project Plan and Content

In the middle of February, project coordinators will begin recruiting small teams (2 to 3) of student teachers from areas near Indian reservations. The total of ten recruited will then participate in a week-long program of orientation to the culture and ethnic problems of the Navajo tribe on the Canoncito Reservation. Immediately following the orientation program, they will move to the reservation for a six-week experience of living and working with the Navajos. The final phase of the project will consist of a follow-up and evaluation based on a systematic program of assessment, reporting and recommendations to appropriate agencies and groups.

Phase one--recruitment and selection of participants

The recruitment and selection of participants will be conducted by Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory (SWCEL) and representatives from the Canoncito Reservation. Recruitment will be based on criteria which have previously been agreed on by participating groups. The final selection of individuals for the project will be determined in large part by reservation representatives. Although the coordinator from SWCEL will act as a liaison between the Indian community and participants, the reservation representatives will have final authority for dismissal of participants not meeting the project agreements.

Phase two--orientation week

A week-long orientation program will be held for participants at SWCEL in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The program is designed to provide the participants with the following:

1. a general ethnological awareness of Navajo culture through reading and discussion of anthropological studies;
2. tribal background and cultural awareness of a particular Navajo tribe on the Canoncito Reservation (John Secatero and Burton Platero, the local contacts from the reservation, will provide this input);
3. basic use of the Navajo language;
4. personal awareness through sensitivity training;
5. a pre-live-in experience.

From Wednesday to Friday of the orientation week, participants will gain the needed background for the project. On Saturday and Sunday, the students will go to the reservation to live in Navajo hogans* in order to apply and assess what they have learned so far. On Monday they will return to the laboratory for two days to discuss and evaluate among themselves and with community representatives their experience thus far. On the basis of their evaluation, the program will be adjusted to meet their individual needs for the live-in.

The orientation week will enable the participants not only to gain some awareness to the tribal culture but will provide the opportunity for them to plan together, prior to the live-in, ways to enrich the experience for all

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* Hogan is the Navajo term for dwelling or home.

concerned. Furthermore, since it is impossible to have full acculturation in such a short period of time, the entire seven-week period will be an orientation experience to another culture and such planning would continue throughout the project.

Phase three--the live-in

The ten student teachers will live for a period of six weeks with Indian families in Navajo hogans. The participants will have two main responsibilities: to assist school personnel and to work with community development programs under the guidance of the Tribal Council.

Assistance in the schools will take the form of working as tutors, teacher aides, and small group facilitators. The students will not only gain experience in working with Indian children, but they will also develop an understanding and awareness of the implications of the following educational problems and achievements in the Indian community:

1. Position of the BIA in administering BIA schools. . .
   What has it done? What is it doing? What changes does it intend to make?
2. Position of Office of Navajo Economic Development pre-school. . .
   What is it now doing? How does it intend to expand its services?
3. Position of the public schools in Albuquerque. . .
   What accommodations in the curriculum are being made for Canoncito students? What is the general level of achievement of Canoncito students? Can the Canoncito students be termed "successful" in the school environment?

The students' work with community development programs will be in the following areas: health, transportation, water, and vocational training.

In order to gain the fullest understanding of the tribal culture, a "buddy system" will be established, pairing each student teacher with an individual (preferably the same age) from the community who will assist him for the duration of the project. Also, concomitant with the project, the student teacher will have access to anthropological studies and material that will supplement his practical learning.

In general, the live-in experience will give the students the opportunity to interact on a personal level with members of the community and to become familiar with patterns of behavior, family structure, and community organization as these relate to the education of Indian children. They will experience first-hand the problems of the community and seek suggestions for educational change from the community members. The students will develop a "process curriculum" * for teacher education. The curriculum will outline ideas and guidelines for activities that would provide supplementary cross-cultural experiences for student teachers.

Evaluation

PERSONAL LOG Each participant will be expected to keep a personal log of his experiences. He will record his general impressions and describe interpersonal growth that results from the experience. A publication will be developed on the basis of the students' logs to illustrate the meaning of such an experience for the student who is preparing to be a teacher.

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* The term "process curriculum" is used to mean a curriculum plan designed by the students based on their experiences in the project.

FILM A film will be produced which will highlight visually and express the importance of a cross-cultural experience as part of a teacher preparation program. Further it will point out areas in which curriculum reform is needed in order to prepare effective teachers of Navajo children. Permission has been given by representatives of the reservation to portray students working with children in the school, assisting members of the community in development projects, talking with members of the Tribal Council about problems of Indian education, and discussing the meaning of this experience for their lives and teaching styles.

FORMAL EVALUATION An evaluation will be developed by SWCEL to 1) measure attitude changes of the participants, 2) evaluate the meaning of the project to the school children and the community, 3) assess the value of such an experience for students preparing to teach, 4) suggest areas for curriculum reform in teacher education to meet the needs of Indian education, and 5) appraise the results of a cross-cultural experience.